

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of managing print services provided by a print provider, the method comprising the steps:
- 5 defining a print managing system controller having the print services provided by the print provider registered therewith;
- defining a network communication link between the print provider and the print managing system controller;
- receiving a job ticket for a print job at the print managing system
- 10 controller;
- determining via the print managing system controller if the print provider has the print services to fulfill the print job, including comparing the job ticket for the print job with the print services provided by the print provider; and
- distributing the job ticket for the print job to the print provider via the
- 15 network communication link if the print managing system controller determines that the print provider has the print services to fulfill the print job.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of defining the network communication link includes defining an Internet communication link between
- 20 the print provider and the print managing system controller, and wherein the step of distributing the job ticket for the print job includes distributing the job ticket for the print job to the print provider via the Internet communication link.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving the job ticket
- 25 includes receiving the job ticket for the print job via the network communication link.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving the job ticket includes receiving the job ticket for the print job from a customer.

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5        5.        The method of claim 4, wherein the step of defining the network communication link includes defining the network communication link between the print provider, the customer, and the print managing system controller, and wherein the step of receiving the job ticket includes receiving the job ticket for the print job from the customer via the network communication link.

6.        The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving the job ticket includes receiving the job ticket for the print job from another print provider.

10       7.        The method of claim 6, wherein the step of defining the network communication link includes defining the network communication link between the print provider, the other print provider, and the print managing system controller, and wherein the step of receiving the job ticket includes receiving the job ticket for the print job from the other print provider via the network communication link.

15       8.        The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving the job ticket includes receiving at least one of a file format, a number of copies, a print medium, a printing layout, a printing quality option, a color printing option, a finishing option, a delivery option, and a customer identification for the print job.

20       9.        The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
             associating a data file for the print job with the job ticket for the print job,  
25       wherein the step of distributing the job ticket includes distributing the job ticket and the data file to the print provider via the network communication link.

30       10.       The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
             registering the print services provided by the print provider with the print managing system controller via the network communication link.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of registering the print services includes storing the print services provided by the print provider and wherein the step of comparing the job ticket includes retrieving the print services provided by the print provider.

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12. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of registering the print services includes registering a printing capability of the print provider with the print managing system controller.

10 13. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of registering the print services includes registering at least one of a file format compatibility, a print medium capability, a printing layout capability, a printing quality capability, a color printing capability, a finishing capability, a delivery capability, and an identification of the print provider.

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14. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of registering the print services includes updating the print services provided by the print provider when the print services provided by the print provider are modified.

20 15. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of distributing the job ticket is performed by the print managing system controller.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of distributing the job ticket includes distributing the job ticket for the print job to another print provider  
25 having print services to fulfill the print job when the print provider is unable to fulfill the print job.

17. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
completing the print job with the print services provided by the print  
30 provider; and  
delivering the print job.

18. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
tracking a status of the print job with the job ticket for the print job.

5 19. A system for managing print services provided by a print provider, the  
system comprising:

a print managing system controller configured to have the print services  
provided by the print provider registered therewith,

10 wherein the print managing system controller is adapted to receive a job  
ticket for a print job and compare the job ticket with the print services provided  
by the print provider to determine if the print provider has the print services to  
fulfill the print job, and wherein the print managing system controller is adapted  
to distribute the job ticket for the print job to the print provider if the print  
15 managing system controller determines that the print provider has the print  
services to fulfill the print job.

20 20. The system of claim 19, wherein the print managing system controller is  
configured to communicate with the print provider via a network communication  
link, and wherein the print managing system controller is adapted to distribute  
the job ticket for the print job to the print provider via the network  
communication link.

25 21. The system of claim 20, wherein the network communication link is an  
Internet communication link.

22. The system of claim 19, wherein the print managing system controller is  
adapted to receive the job ticket for the print job via a network communication  
link.

30 23. The system of claim 22, wherein the network communication link is an  
Internet communication link.

24. The system of claim 19, wherein the print managing system controller is adapted to receive the job ticket for the print job from a customer.

5 25. The system of claim 24, wherein the print managing system controller is configured to communicate with the customer via a network communication link, and wherein the print managing system controller is adapted to receive the job ticket for the print job from the customer via the network communication link.

10 26. The system of claim 25, wherein the network communication link is an Internet communication link.

15 27. The system of claim 19, wherein the print managing system controller is adapted to receive the job ticket for the print job from another print provider.

20 28. The system of claim 27, wherein the print managing system controller is configured to communicate with the other print provider via a network communication link, and wherein the print managing system controller is adapted to receive the job ticket for the print job from the other print provider via the network communication link.

25 29. The system of claim 28, wherein the network communication link is an Internet communication link.

30 30. The system of claim 19, wherein the job ticket for the print job includes at least one of a file format, a number of copies, a print medium, a printing layout, a printing quality option, a color printing option, a finishing option, a delivery option, and an identification for the print job.

31. The system of claim 19, wherein the print managing system controller is adapted to receive a data file for the print job, and wherein the print managing system controller is adapted to distribute the job ticket and the data file to the print provider via a network communication link.

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32. The system of claim 31, wherein the network communication link is an Internet communication link.

33. The system of claim 19, wherein the print services provided by the print provider are registered with the print managing system controller via a network communication link.

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34. The system of claim 33, wherein the network communication link is an Internet communication link.

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35. The system of claim 19, further comprising:  
a print managing data storage system configured to communicate with the print managing system controller, wherein the print managing system controller is adapted to store a registration of the print services provided by the print provider in the print managing data storage system.

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36. The system of claim 19, wherein the print services provided by the print provider include a printing capability of the print provider.

37. The system of claim 36, wherein the printing capability of the print provider includes at least one of a file format capability, a print medium capability, a printing layout capability, a printing quality capability, a color printing capability, a finishing capability, a delivery capability, and an identification of the print provider.

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38. The system of claim 19, wherein the print services provided by the print provider are updated in the print managing system controller when the print services provided by the print provider are modified.

5 39. The system of claim 19, wherein the print managing system controller is adapted to distribute the job ticket for the print job to another print provider having print services to fulfill the print job when the print provider is unable to fulfill the print job.

10 40. The system of claim 19, wherein the print managing system controller is adapted to track a status of the print job with the job ticket for the print job.